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USAID LET'S READ PROJECT

Parent, Community, and Private Sector Engagement Plan

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COR Name: Beatrice Mweene, Education Specialist, Education Office

Submitted by:

Denise Clarke, Chief of Party Zambia
Education Development Center
Email: deniseclarke@edc.org

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Parent, Community, and Private Sector Engagement Plan

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Prepared for:

Mohib Ahmed, Contractor Officer (CO)

Office of Acquisition and Assistance

United States Agency for International Development/Zambia

c/o American Embassy

Subdivision 694/Stand 100

Ibex Hill Road

Lusaka, Zambia

Prepared by:

Education Development Center

43 Foundry Avenue

Waltham, MA 02453-8313

USA

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Executive Summary

USAID Let's Read is a five-year (January 7, 2019 – January 6, 2024) project targeting five provinces, specifically, Eastern, Muchinga, Southern, North-Western, and Western. The project's primary focus is to improve reading outcomes for approximately 1.4 million children attending pre-primary (kindergarten) through to Grades 3 and provide professional development for teachers to support reading interventions in Zambian public and community schools. The project is managed by the Education Development Center (EDC) in partnership with VVOB, Resonance, and Kentalis.

The project is designed to achieve two major results:

1. IR 1 Public and Community Schools Performance Improved.
2. IR 2 Ministry of Education Systems Strengthened.

The project will seek to achieve the following four key objectives encompassing a number of activities:

- Objective 1: Reading Package Intervention
- Objective 2: Meet the Metrics
- Objective 3: Performance Tracking System
- Objective 4: Increase Parent, Community, and Private Sector Engagement

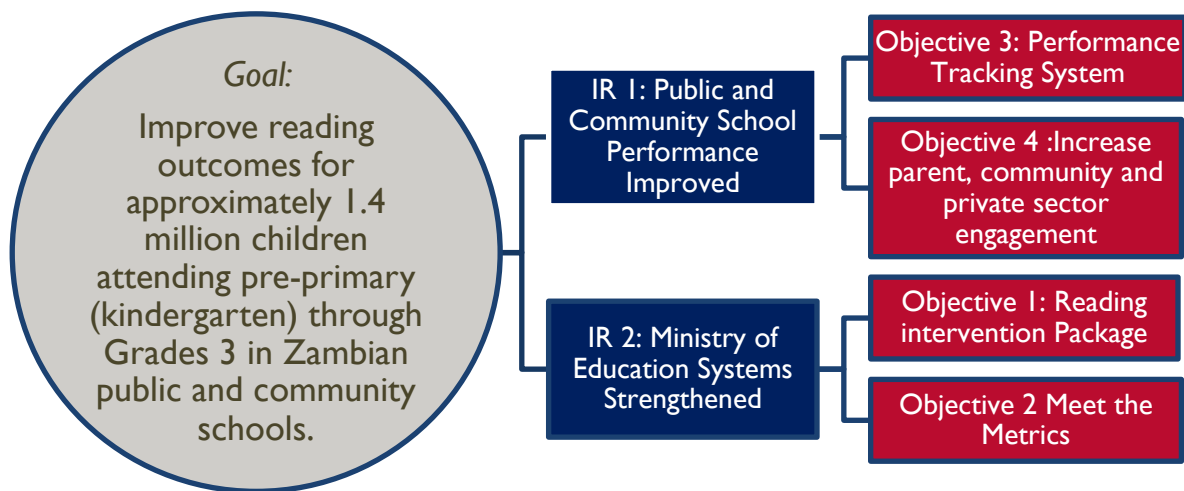


Figure IUSAID Let's Read Goals and Objectives

Introduction

All schools exist in a community context, and children live with caregivers, however they may be defined. When families and communities support good reading practices at home, and communities develop and strengthen supportive reading environments and demand accountability of the education system, children are more likely to develop effective reading habits which can lead to better reading outcomes. In USAID Let's Read project, family and community engagement are considered key to achieving improved learning outcomes for students. Through IR 2, and the tasks in Objective 4, Increase Parent, Community, and Private Sector Engagement, the project team will aim to strengthen and consolidate parent and community participation in order to improve learning and reading achievements. Research confirms that family plays a critical role in supporting children's education and that children with engaged parents and supportive community environments are much more likely to succeed academically than those without such support.¹ Research has also more narrowly focused on reading and how families can specifically support children in developing the essential "early literacy skills" or foundational skills needed to become successful readers. "Key early literacy predictors of reading and school success include oral language, alphabetic code, and print knowledge."² Reading to and with children every day is a critical support, but there are other influential activities that parents, even low literate and not readers themselves, can do to support their children's literacy development.

In addition, creating a rich literate environment is "more than just the availability and accessibility of books and materials;" it is a creation of "a social, political, and cultural" environment that values and nurtures all forms and functions of literacy. It involves having people embrace literate behavior and understanding that individuals, families, and the broader community all play a critical role.³

As a key element to our work, the project will aim to raise awareness among parents and caregivers about the important roles they play in educating their children, including the supportive roles they can provide and that complement the efforts of the teachers/schools. As such, the project will implement targeted actions to facilitate a greater appreciation for reading, both individually and collectively, at home and in community spaces. It is expected that with increased parent and community engagement, support through public private partnerships will be that much more attractive, which in turn can help to address possible challenges including long term sustainability of activities.

As current literature highlights, effective community engagement works best where it is an ongoing cumulative process enabling relationships and trust to build and strengthen over time⁴. The main aim will be to increase parent (literate and semi-literate parents) and community engagement. USAID Let's Read will adopt the Epstein's model⁵ on parental involvement as a proposed framework in rolling out Objective

¹ Henderson, A. & Mapp, K. (2002) *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement*. National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools.

² Strickland, D & Riley-Ayers, S. (2006). *Early Literacy: Policy and Practice in the Preschool Years*, National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), Rutgers University, April.

³ Chhetri, N. and Baker, D. P. (2005). *The Environment for Literacy among Nations: Concepts, Past Research and Preliminary Analysis*. (Background paper prepared for the EFA Global Monitoring Report. UNESCO. p. 4.

⁴ Community Planning Toolkit, Big Lottery Fund, 2014.

⁵ Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement : <https://www.sps186.org/downloads/table/13040/6TypesJ.Epstein.pdf>

4. Epstein describes 6 types of parental involvement and the table below indicates how these would be used in the Zambian context to support reading gains of learners.

Chart 1: Parental Engagement

Types of Parental Engagement	Illustrative Practices that could be applied in USAID Let's Read.
Parenting: <i>Help all families establish positive and engaged home environments to support children's learning outcomes in reading</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise parents/caregivers on the existing family support programs • Home visits at transition point to elementary as well as to reinforce the importance of early and regular/consistent attendance • Stress the role of parents/caregivers as a role model • Motivate parents/caregivers to tell (/read) stories • Inform parents/caregivers about early stimulation and importance of play in learning • Inform parents of importance of listening to young learners • Inform parents on the negative effects of corporal punishment • Inform parents about the role of ECE and pre-reading • Importance of inclusive education for children with disabilities
Communicating: <i>Support schools in developing effective and varied forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBCC via community radio; these messages can include but not be limited to importance of reading; ability and right of all children to learn to read; strategies for supporting children's reading at home etc. • Use of verbal communication channels (e.g. at the school gate, in school events or PTA); • School-to-home and home-to-school communication about school programs and children's progress
Volunteering: <i>Encourage parent help and support as volunteers themselves and to work with youth volunteers.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the kind of volunteer support teachers could best benefit from to support improved student learning outcomes in reading. • Support the development of an action plan through various parent groups to provide the above needed support. (Also see proposed youth reading corps volunteers.)
Learning at home: <i>Provide families with strategies and activities to help their children at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information for families on developmentally and grade level appropriate skills required for students in all subjects at each grade. • Information on homework and how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home.
Decision Making: <i>Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active PTA/PCSC or other parent organizations, advisory councils, or committees for parent leadership and participation, including recruitment and management of youth volunteers

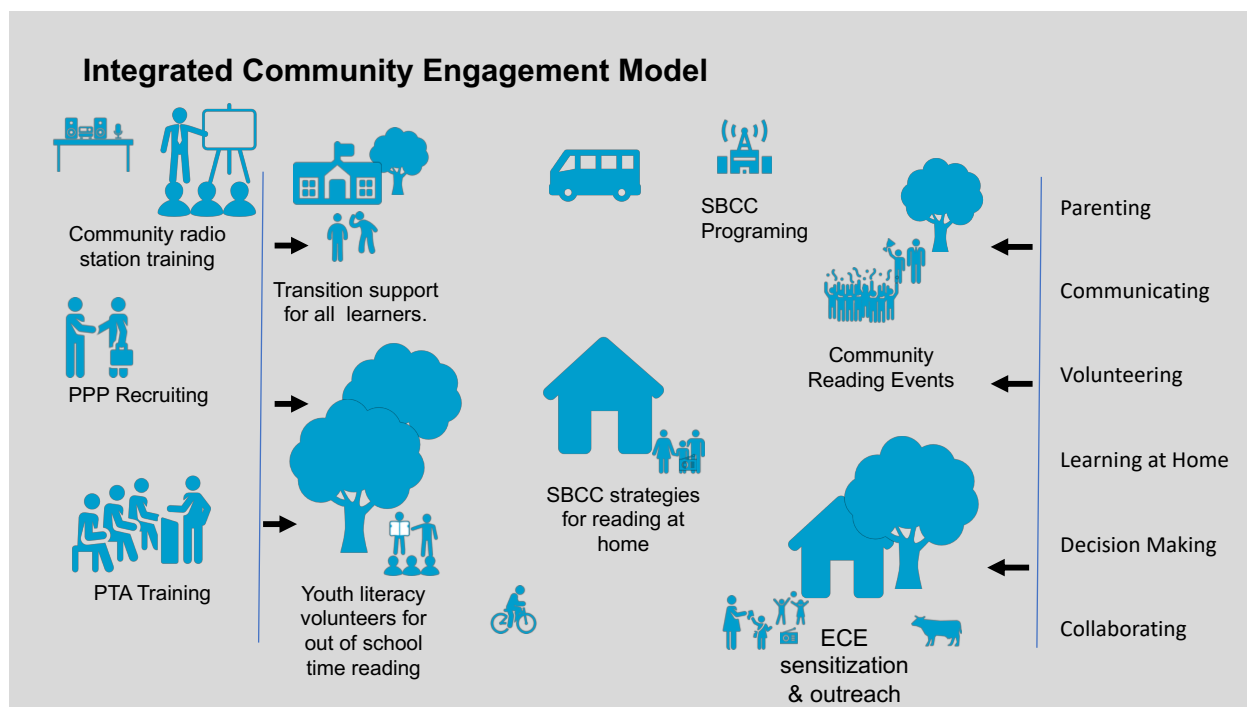
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networks to link families with parent/care givers representatives.
Collaborating with the community: <i>Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information for students and families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support, and other programs or services (healthier living and richer life experiences support improved learning). • Information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents. •

Expanding opportunities for parental and community involvement in order to improve reading outcomes will be done through five main strategies which are discussed below:

- Strategy 1: Employing SBCC via community radio
- Strategy 2: Engaging Parent Teachers Associations (PTAs) and Parent Community School Committees (CSCs)
- Strategy 3: Using Youth Volunteers to Support Literacy
- Strategy 4: Introducing Early Childhood Sensitization teachers/PTAs/PCSCs
- Strategy 5: Engaging with the Private Sector and Linking back to Community and School Support

The four strategies combine to provide an integrated and complementary set of interventions that will increase local capacity, foster greater enthusiasm, and motivate stronger commitment by families and community toward building a culture of reading in Zambia to realize improved reading outcomes for early childhood and early grade children. These are summarized in Figure 2 below and described in more detail in the narrative.

Figure 2 Integrated Community Engagement Model



Strategy I: Social and Behavior Change Communication Campaign

An important component in the parent and community engagement will be the Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) Campaign. This will involve conducting early research on parents' beliefs, attitudes, and practices around reading, early childhood education, and children with disabilities to better construct our explanations and justifications to change behavior in support of reading.

During Year I, Let's Read will begin preparing for the SBCC Campaign, which will promote positive behavior change among families and communities and increased involvement in their children's education. The Campaign will also promote themes including but not limited to:

- The importance of children in the early grades **learning to read in a language they can understand and the influence of** this on the future academic success of students
- **Gender equity between boys and girls** with respect to access to education, retention and success in school.
- The importance of **parents' involvement in the life of the school and in accompanying their children** in the early grades as they learn to read and write.
- **The importance of reading with children at home to strengthen skills outside of school.**
- **ALL parents can support their child(ren) in learning to read** – even if they cannot read themselves, and even if they have limited financial or material resources at home.

Prior to the design and development of the SBCC Strategy and Campaign, Let's Read will carefully analyze the findings from our interviews with parents about their beliefs, attitudes, and practices towards reading,

which will inform key messages to be used in the Campaign. As part of the broader Outreach and Communications Strategy, the team will develop activities and communications to raise awareness about the project's objectives and motivate communities and schools to get involved. Specific contextualized messaging in the materials and activities noted below will be informed by the data gathered from families and communities. This may include:

- Radio spots produced by the project, and training support to community radio stations to run the SBCC programming in communities; broadcast by local radio stations on the three above themes (others as defined via the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to be conducted with parents). FGDs help inform key messages to be included the wider outreach and communications strategies to be used by USAID Let's Read. Once these messages are developed (skits, stories etc.), the project will work closely with community radio stations in the five provinces to broadcast at least one message weekly for 30 weeks⁶. Additionally, issues informed by the FGDs can assist in informing additional discussions with the government and private sector on needs and opportunities in communities/schools.
- Home visits to parents of grade 1 and 2 students to increase their awareness of the above themes and also to increase their understanding of early grade reading and what they can do at home to help their children.
- A series of posters that can be displayed in the community in prominent, popular places that address the themes. Smaller flyers with pictures on the themes and that are shared with parents and community members during discussions/meetings
- Meetings where community members are invited. Discussions center on the themes and also what exactly schools are doing to help improve early grade reading and how families and community members can support these activities. Sharing success stories with and amongst communities will also be encouraged and facilitated.

The above activities are expected to take place on a regular basis. In addition, on a more occasional basis, round table discussions, public fora, and caravans that include the participation of local administrative authorities and education officials will be facilitated. PTAs and PCSCs will be encouraged to identify and implement strategies that they think would be most effective in their communities. The entire community will be invited to attend these events, and in addition to the discussions, other activities such as community drama and storytelling contests will be encouraged.

Strategy 2: Engaging PTAs and PCSCs

Long term sustainability of the USAID Let's Read project will rely on an integrated and complementary set of interventions to enhance community capacity, increase local support for reading in and out of school, and motivate the commitment to and enthusiasm for reading across communities. Through Let's Engage, communities will make use of data generated through the Performance Tracking System (Objective 3) to help inform locally-led strategies, including support for teachers and pupils/children.

⁶ Airing times of weekly broadcasts will be decided on in conjunction with communities and radio stations.

Supported through the work with head teachers, Zonal Inset Coordinators (ZICs) communities would be provided with assessment data through ‘Let’s Measure’ and use the results to help inform selected community strategies, but also to see if and how their interventions and activities are having an impact.

The work under Objective 4 will rely heavily on the project’s district personnel, including its District Reading Coaches, who will be actively engaged in the schools and communities and who will assist in implementing the targeted strategies. With the PTAs and PCSCs, the project will utilize a training process to develop skills focused on effective participation in school management and monitoring, especially related to improving learning outcomes and reading. Content will focus on an overview of the project; recruitment, selection, and management of a Youth Reading Corps – including youth volunteers who can help to support inclusive education for children with special needs; identifying opportunities for supporting community level reading activities; and the planning and organization needed to make these successful.

The training will also highlight the PTAs’ and PCSCs’ fundamental roles in contributing to the improvement of the educational process, as well as its functions according to the Principles of Education Boards Governance and Management Manual (Education Board Services, 2005) and other relevant MoGE policies. The project will leverage these important policies, encouraging PTAs and PCSCs to analyze the current situation carefully in order to make decisions for improvement. Once the actions have been defined, the project will provide support in the strategic and operational planning process, specifically in the design and implementation of the school and communities plans and activities expected to lead to improved reading outcomes. These activities will be incorporated into annual trainings and may include a number of activities including, but not limited to, the organization of reading clubs, library support, family mentoring, creating school climates favorable to improving the quality of teaching and learning, and advocacy for quality schooling.

Given the number of schools, training for PTAs and PCSCs will be done on a phased basis. By the end of Q4, FY 2019 USAID Let’s Read will have trained at least 1,110 representatives from these school governance structures to support the equivalent number of schools, with all school governance structures being trained by Year 4 of the project. Through on-going monitoring of the activities of PTAs and PCSCs, data on the effectiveness of the various approaches used by communities, will in turn inform MoGE planning for sustainability at the community level. Furthermore, by staggering the community level interventions, Let’s Read will then be better able to isolate and measure the influence of community-based interventions in improving reading outcomes. In addition to the activities highlighted in Chart 1: Parental Engagement above, other activities that will be encouraged include helping parents of young children take advantage of the environment around them as a rich resource for learning. Example activities include taking Print Walks around the community to identify environmental signs (shop and street signs, license plates, menu boards, and the like) to help children learn print is everywhere, and print has meaning. Another activity is making a shopping list together (words or pictures) and then checking off the items when put in the basket at the shop. Simple daily tasks can become wonderful learning opportunities when parents are given the tools and strategies to support them.

Table 2 below shows the planned activity roll outs for staggered training of the PTAs and PCSCs over the life of the project.

Table 1 Roll of trainings for PTAs and PCSCs

PTAs/PCSCs trained/activated	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
	1,100 schools	1,100 schools	1,100 schools	950 schools	0	4,250 schools
Proposed training content: recruitment and management of youth reading corps members; recruitment of deaf and adult volunteers, community reading activities planning and organisation						
PTAs/PCSCs supported to implement relevant reading activities	1,100 schools	1,100 schools	1,100 schools	950 schools	0	4,250 schools

Additionally, Let's Read will use the opportunity under its learning agenda and research studies to focus on aspects of the project that are innovative or raise important questions for program improvement and sustainability of outcomes and that can help inform lessons for effective approaches towards the goal of reading. A key learning agenda question for Year 1 will be around community support for literacy. Below are the key research questions, and a brief description of the study methodology that will be used.

Justification: The purpose of this research is to gain insight into the barriers that parents and community members face in supporting their children's reading, and to identify feasible strategies for reinforcing community support for literacy to inform the development of SBCC messages and community activities to encourage the practice of reading with children at home.

Research questions: What do parents and leading community members believe about the importance of education, and about how children learn to read? How do these beliefs influence their decision to send their children to school? Are there differences between boys and girls, or children with disabilities? What role do they perceive that parents and community members should play in supporting literacy? Are there differences between literate and non-literate parents?

Research method: We will conduct Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with parents, community leaders, and local business persons. We will include urban and rural communities, as well as those with community schools and public schools with and without ECE centers. In each of those communities, we will hold FGDs with mixed gender groups of parents (literate and non-literate) and local community and business leaders.

In addition to targeting parents and communities, Let's Read will also pay particular attention to engaging traditional leadership such as chiefs and headmen, and in the case of the Western Region, the Barotse Royal Establishment are informed and where feasible involved in activities as past experience has highlighted the significant role these traditional leaders play in ensuring the success of the activities in their districts/locale. Additionally, values such as solidarity and volunteerism will be promoted, orienting key

actors in the community as a whole toward a more thorough social oversight that contributes to the quality and effectiveness of the process.

Furthermore, the project will strengthen the connection between the PTAs and PCSCs through school head teachers, and the wider MoGE district, zonal, and provincial education network. Let's Read will seek to empower the PTA to take a more active role, beyond a general concern for the infrastructure or upkeep of the school to an effective participation in processes impacting children's learning outcomes. This will include guidance on work plan development to ensure that actions to improve reading are considered, such as: utilization of volunteers, support for disadvantaged families, mentoring and tutoring and reading time with their children.

In addition to the planning and accompaniment activities, Let's Read will train PTAs on how to effectively monitor the implementation of activities. In this monitoring of the indicators, the project will go beyond evaluation results and seek to analyze access, absenteeism and performance progress, especially related to reading outcomes. This will equip each PTA and PCSC with evidence to addresses the gaps and promote inclusion and equity. The tools for assessing and monitoring school climate will be provided by Let's Read. These will ensure that learning is prioritized and that key indicators are monitored, analyzed and used to inform decision making. The monitoring will be the input to reorient actions and implement new projects that allow for improvement, emphasizing learning, but extending community actions to assist disadvantaged families towards access and retention. Parents and caregivers will be invited to accompany the formative evaluation processes and participate in meetings aimed at socializing performance results, as well as to inform decision making for future activities.

Central to the engagement with the PTAs and PCSCs will be improved access to information that will allow for better informed decisions. Through the Let's Engage component of the Let's Read suite, parents and communities will have access to data from the Performance Tracking System (Let's Measure). This data will be simplified and shared by the MoGE staff in fora such as PTA/PCSC meetings, community meetings etc. In turn these discussions will help determine what appropriate local reading interventions can be implemented by parents and communities.

Let's Read will initially help to lead and guide these discussions, however, over time, the project will gradually transfer the responsibility of this to the MoGE by building and implementing a joint plan in order to achieve this transfer of activities and support. Through capacity building of MoGE staff, the project will strengthen districts, as well as the other decentralized levels of the education system that have specific responsibilities related to improved reading outcomes in the following ways. District level MoGE staff, including the District Resource Centre Coordinators (DRCCs), the District Education Board Secretaries (DEBS) and the Standards Officers, will work closely with parents and communities, using data generated through Let's Measure to help inform and guide discussions on what strategies and solutions to support reading could entail. The work undertaken by the project team with the district level MoGE staff is expected to complement the more general trainings given to MoGE staff, so they become active participants, promoters, and leaders of the process to improve reading outcomes in communities.

Strategy 3: Using Youth Volunteers to Support Literacy

To complement the roles played by the MoGE and project staff at the provincial and district levels, the youth volunteers selected by PTAs/PCSCs will also play a critical support role to the teachers. Where feasible, the project will explore the identification of possible volunteers already at the district level through partners such as the Peace Corps. Youth recently graduated from secondary and or tertiary levels, and who are currently unemployed will be encouraged to apply. As indicated in Strategy 2, a part of the training provided to the PTAs and PCSCs will be the identification, selection, and supervision of these youth volunteers. At least one youth volunteer will be trained per school with the main scope of work to include:

- Providing literacy training to support teachers and students (including in the classroom)
- Customizing and developing low/no-cost reading aids for teaching and learning
- Working with the PTAs and PCSCs to support community-led and implemented literacy activities geared towards students, their parents and the wider community
- Working with teachers to identify and help struggling students through a variety of methods including but not limited to mentoring, home visits, and holiday (vacation) reading activities

Starting in Q3, FY 2019, the project will begin working with the first sets of selected youth volunteers to be trained to support the areas indicated above. The expected roll out in Year 1 and throughout the rest of the project is summarized in Table 3 below:

Table 2 Roll out of Training for Youth Reading Corps Volunteers

Youth Reading Corps Volunteers	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
	1,100 schools	1,100 schools	1,100 schools	950 schools	0	4,250 schools
1 volunteer per school trained, providing literacy tutoring, and supporting teachers. Volunteers will receive a small stipend over two years.						

Volunteers must be prepared to serve for two years at a minimum. Youth selected will be trained using EDC's Read Right Now youth literacy tutoring model and will also be provided with Let's Practice resources. EDC will work with district level project and MoGE staff to provide volunteers continued support through regular face to face meetings, as well as through on-line mediated groups such as WhatsApp.

As a part of the strategies to support inclusive education as well as gender and social inclusion, Let's Read will seek to identify and select community volunteers who are deaf, hard of hearing and or sight impaired to support students with similar disabilities (as well as all children) and will advocate with their parents and wider community for their enrollment in school. Where possible, both these groups of volunteers will be encouraged to apply. Participation of such volunteers will also demonstrate that ALL individuals are capable and able to contribute meaningfully to their community. With dropout rates for girls continuing to remain high at the primary level, females will also be encouraged to apply for volunteer

positions with the added strategy of providing good role models and encouragement for girls to remain in school.

Throughout the life of the project, and through the outreach that the volunteers will provide, EDC and partners will actively see how to support and promote parent school dialogues targeting early childhood education, as well as learners with disabilities. This will also form a part of the SBCC messaging that will be implemented (see Strategy 1).

Parallel to these strategies outlined for volunteers, EDC and partners will work with the MoGE to determine how using these youth volunteers could be used to inform a wider strategy for promoting and expanding youth volunteerism to support schools and communities to improve educational services. Additionally, Let's Read will explore how these strategies could be supported through PPPs.

Strategy 4: Early Childhood Sensitization through teachers/PTAs/PCSCs

USAID Let's Read intervention strategy to support early childhood sensitization will be done in conjunction with VVOB. The approach selected will not seek to set up new structures but will make use of the existing structures linked to the ECE classes/centers so using the school as meeting place, where parents meet teachers, or other parents; and the school as agent of change towards parents and community. In order to make this possible the intervention will focus on the capacity building for Head-teachers and ECE Teachers. The main focus of the capacity building at the levels of the head teachers and ECE teachers will be on how to reach out to parents and communities to effectively engage them in the pre-reading journey of their child(ren). Additionally, ECE coaches will coach and guide teachers and head-teachers when they interact with teachers and communities.

Using its own experience in using the Epstein model described earlier, as well as its work in Zambia, VVOB will customize the types of parental involvement used to support this strategy in a Zambian ECE context with a focus on paying particular attention to what is needed in the Zambian context, as well as what parents/caregivers can proactively and easily do. This is summarized in Table 3 below:

Table 3 Epstein's Model of Parental Engagement to Support ECE in the Zambian Context

Type of Parental Engagement	Approaches to support ECE in Zambia
Parenting	Advise parents on the existing family support programs e.g. on health, nutrition, and other services Home visits at transition point to elementary Stress the role of parents as a role model Ask the parents to tell (/read) stories Inform parents about early stimulation and importance of play in learning Inform parents of importance of listening to young learners Inform parents on the negative effects of corporal punishment

	Inform parents about the role of ECE and pre-reading
Communicating	WhatsApp group for parents (for those that have a mobile and are literate) Main focus of communication is however verbal communication (e.g. at the school gate, in school events or PTA) School-to-home and home-to-school communication (via a small simple “back-and-forth” booklet) about school programs and children's progress
Volunteering	Recruit and organize parent help and support
Learning at home	Provide information and ideas to families about how to help their learner(s) at home with pre-reading and transition to grade 1
Decision-making	Active PTA
Collaborating with Community	Coordinate resources and services from the community for young learners and the school Participate in community meetings Provide information for families on community health and other programs or services.

Proposed roll out of training for PTAs and PCSCs as it related to sensitization content on ECE is projected as follows:

Table 4 ECE Sensitization Training Roll-out

Early Childhood sensitization through teachers/PTAs/PCSCs	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
	1,100 schools	1,100 schools	1,100 schools	950 schools	0	4,250 schools
Sensitization content: Importance of early childhood stimulation and play, parental reading and/or story telling; information about other support programs (nutrition, vaccination, etc.); home visits at transition point of Grade 1; PTA/PCSC activation around ECE issues.						

As proposed in the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (Plan)⁷ in Years 2 and 3, USAID Let's Read will explore the transition from Early Childhood Education to Grade 1. The November 2018 USAID Education Policy highlights the importance of assessing school readiness to ensure effective transition from quality pre-primary to primary school (p32). Let's Read proposes to undertake a study to understand the impact of USAID Let's Read early childhood education interventions on school readiness by examining the effect

Proposed Research Question:

At the start of Grade 1, do pupils who attended early childhood education programs using Let's Read ECE materials and strategies perform better in pre-reading skills than pupils who did not access early childhood programs? What is the added value of the Interactive Audio Instruction component of the ECE intervention?

of quality ECE programs on the acquisition of pre-literacy skills during pupils' transition to Grade 1. The project will also explore the extent to which the use of Interactive Audio Instruction in kindergarten adds value to the ECE intervention. Results of the study will inform continued support for ECE materials development and teacher training, so that efforts can be focused on areas of highest need, and evidence-based strategies for improving learning outcomes. Education Data is also conducting a longitudinal study of ECE learners through Grade 3. To ensure that this study is not redundant, Let's Read will collaborate with Education Data on the final design of research questions and methods. The

project will only proceed with separate studies if there is no duplication, and may be able to gain efficiencies through joint sampling and/or data collection that feeds into complementary analyses.

Strategy 5: Engaging with the Private Sector and Linking back to Community and School Support

While the Ministry of Education has the mandate to provide education to all eligible children through government institutions of learning, demand for education outpaces the supply. Both community as well as government schools remain under-resourced, making the provision of quality education challenging. The large unmet demand for education, coupled with limited government budgets, has resulted in the government creating an enabling environment for the private sector to partner in the provision of education. This can expand equitable access and improve the quality of education provided to learners and consequently learning outcomes. Private partners typically include various organization types including for-profit and non-profit organizations, Civil Society organizations, faith-based organizations, and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)⁸.

Under the past project implemented by EDC, USAID Time to Learn (TTL), Table 3 below shows a number of public-private partnerships were implemented that yielded positive results.

Table 5 Private Sector Partners Engaged under USAID Time to Learn Project

Partner	Type of Support
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⁷ USAID Let's Read Draft Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) (February 2019)

⁸ Education Development Center (2017) Time to Learn Project : Report on Public Private Partnerships Formed to Mobilize Resources.

TOTAL Zambia	Community Library Boxes
Radio Lyambai, Western Province	Free airtime for the airing of radio episodes
Radio Mosi-O-Tunya, Southern Province	
ProPrint Zambia	Pens, paper, chalk Reading materials in Bemba, Tonga and Nyanja
Michael Norgrove Foundation	School supplies
Book Hut	English and local language books
Ndengwe Car Hire	Note books for teachers.

Scaling these opportunities and attracting new partners remained a challenge after initial successes and these lessons will be taken into consideration to inform the present strategy and roll out. Partnerships are on-going and require dedication not just from the project, but also the corporate and/or other partners as well as the MoGE. There must be a sense of shared value that also takes into consideration how strategic partners could address private sector needs, whether these are promoting new products and services or some other value to their company. At a minimum, PPPs supported under USAID Let's Read will seek to include:

- a) an appropriate allotment of time by both the corporate partner as well as the implementer;
- b) a clear articulation of how private sector support can help to meet education demands; and
- c) value to businesses

Starting Year 1, USAID Let's Read - through partner Resonance - will begin the initial steps of its Partnership Journey approach (previously referred to as the Sustainable, Transparent, Effective Partnerships or "STEP") in preparation to conduct a Private Sector Landscape Assessment (PSLA) in Q3 of FY 2019 in the effort to engage private sector partners and create shared-value partnerships that support Let's Read's goals. Beginning with desk research and initial interviews with Let's Read partners (EDC, VVOB, and Kentalis), and complemented by Resonance's PSLA conducted in 2017 for the USAID/Zambia mission, the framework and scope of work for the RPA will be developed. Once a database of potential private sector partners is completed, the RPA fieldwork will commence in Q3 during which the Private Sector Engagement Specialist (PSES) with support from Resonance home office short-term technical assistance, will conduct in-person key informant interviews (KIs) with approximately 80 businesses and other resource partners. Once KIs have been conducted and data has been analysed, Resonance will facilitate a Participatory Prioritization workshop with Let's Read stakeholders including key EDC, VVOB, Kentalis, and MoGE (as relevant). Following the prioritization process, the PSES will work to develop the partnerships initially selected for implementation, in close coordination with EDC and partner staff through the facilitation of partnership building workshops. Drawing on Partnership Journey tools, the workshops use advanced participatory methods (APM) to co-develop with companies the shared-value engagement and define partnership roles and responsibilities, resources, proposed activities, and milestones/deadlines.

Likely targets will include different groups whose business' interests overlap with project objectives such as

- Mobile network operator partnerships to support the provision of technology solutions and or support (e.g. tablets, SIM Cards, bandwidth) to support the timely collection and dissemination of assessment data through "Let's Measure"
- Communications partnerships to support localized and targeted messages which could include sponsorship of broadcast times to support "Let's Engage"
- Technology partnerships to support tablet and radio provision to support Let's Engage; and/or to expand the provision of electricity (solar/generators etc.) at schools
- Agriculture partnerships to support school attendance through nutrition and school feeding
- Partnerships to support vision screening and glasses for children with vision impairments
- Partnerships to support deaf and hard of hearing, for example through the provision of assistive devices at the individual and or school level
- Partnerships to support the printing of additional teaching and learning materials and resources to support strategies such as Let's Teach
- Partnerships with publishers, artists, actors, and musicians to support production of IAI and other potential literacy materials

Additionally, USAID Let's Read will seek to build on the MoGE PPP Strategy⁹ as it seeks to promote the participation of the private sector in providing quality education to Zambian children by leveraging new and strategic resources to complement MOGE resources and help fill existing resource gaps. Table 4 below summarizes objectives that benefit both MOGE and its private sector partners, as per this strategy.

Table 6 Mutual Benefits of PPPs for MOGE and the Private Sector

MOGE	Private Sector Partner
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to new and strategic resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cash - Products and services - Technologies - Skills competencies - Sustainability mind-set • Access to private sector networks • Increased impact and sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand building and reputation • Leverage public sector investment • Measure impact (return on investment) • New markets, customers • Employee motivation (volunteerism) • Relationship with communities • Pilot new technologies or products.

Results from the RPA will be used to inform annual education stakeholder meetings with the MoGE – one to be held in Year 1, and then in subsequent years 2 per year. The cross section of activities from the 3 previously described strategies will further be supported through the PPPs. Early wins and achievements will be used to leverage additional PPPs to provide support for communities and schools.

⁹ Developed under the USAID Read To Succeed (RTS) Project, 2012-2017

Conclusion

Objective 4 through the planned strategies outlined in this Engagement Strategy will help inform a number of underlying principles which are also at the core of USAID Let's Read project:

Addressing over-arching and on-going issues around quality of education generally and reading specifically: Issues around the quality of education, including pupil's inability to read at grade level, are not new and continue to be of grave concern. The engagement strategy as outlined allows for a number of critical partners, including the MoGE, to develop, test and improve on practical strategies that can be used to support efforts at school level, and that can positively impact on reading outcomes.

Sustainability: With the gains expected to be made through a robust engagement strategy with key stakeholders including the MoGE staff (central and decentralized), teachers, head teachers, parents and communities, project activities will have a better chance of being sustained once the project ends. Building needed capacity at relevant levels; linking key stakeholders through partnerships; ensuring that schools are adequately resourced and teachers trained; and using data to inform key decisions including the type of support that can be given to teachers and students to enable learners to read are critical success factors to be built from the on-set.

Building on previous success: A key approach integrated in the engagement strategy will be building on the success and lessons that partners have had here in Zambia and elsewhere to not repeat the usual mistakes and challenges. These lessons will help to inform realistic and practical approaches that can be used and sustained.

Coordination and alignment : While Objectives 1-3 under USAID Let's Read seek to directly address challenges leading to students not being able to read¹⁰, Objective 4 aims to provide engagement , capacity building and coordination mechanisms not just for USAID Let's Read partners to support the success of those strategies/interventions, but recognizing that neither state or non-state actors can do this on their own.

As mentioned throughout this plan, to improve reading outcomes of Zambian children in early childhood and the early grades, not only are improvements in reading instruction at the school level important, but also, increased parental and community engagement around supporting children in reading is needed. Parents/caregivers, communities and Zambian civil society need to not only understand the importance of reading for their children's and their communities' future, but also take action to support their young readers, and advocate for improved education services from their local schools. To support the MoGE in reading improvement, Let's Read aims over the course of five years to mobilize parents, communities, civil society and the private sector to take action in their homes and communities to improve literacy for 1.4 million children.

¹⁰ USAID Let's Read Project (2019) Reading challenges in Zambia: inconsistent local language instruction; limited time on task; insufficient teacher training, mentoring and coaching; limited materials; lack of formative assessments; uneven reporting and use of reading results; and un-engaged communities